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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IR](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: JORDAN: IRANIAN ELECTION RESULTS VIEWED AS  
LEGITIMATE

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Jordanian contacts believe the large electoral gap between President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad and Mir Hossein Moussavi may be a legitimate reflection of Iranian popular sentiment. Many blamed Moussavi's loss on his alleged connections to corrupt previous officials and a poor electoral strategy. Some Jordanians expect Ahmedinejad's tone to become less strident now that the election results have validated his position, but they have little faith that there will be major shifts in Iranian policies. End Summary.

#### Election Results Seen As Legitimate

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¶2. (C) Moussavi's claims of electoral fraud sound hollow to Jordanian contacts, as millions of ballots would have had to have been tampered with to account for the large gap between the two candidates. A newspaper editor told us that there was "no proof" that effectively challenges the legitimacy of the results. Several other contacts noted that Moussavi's claims of fraud reflect his weakness, as he has been left with no other means to obtain electoral victory. The head of a local think tank opined that Moussavi risks a harsh reaction from the security forces if he continues to contest the final results.

¶3. (C) Several interlocutors criticized Moussavi's election strategy, which failed to place distance between him and the political liabilities and corrupt reputation of former president Ali Akbar Rafsanjani. The head of a Jordanian think tank also faulted Moussavi for not pursuing support in rural communities. Unchallenged in these areas and in the south of Iran, Ahmedinejad "was never in any danger."

#### "Ahmedinejad II" Or More Of The Same?

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¶4. (C) Campaign debates showed that Iranian political elites are critical of Ahmedinejad's harsh tone on foreign policy matters. Several contacts told us that they expected Ahmedinejad to become more moderate in his second term, with one commentator saying that the election would mark a transition to "Ahmedinejad II." Emboldened by his electoral victory, the president now has political capital to pursue a broader range of policy choices, including in his political engagement with the West.

¶5. (C) Yet Jordanian contacts predicted few shifts in policy. The head of a local think tank said that Iran's key stances on foreign matters would remain unchanged. A political commentator also believes that Ahmedinejad will continue to be a "difficult negotiator" when it comes to the nuclear issue and Iran's regional influence, despite the domestic criticism heard during the campaign debates.

#### Jordanians See Little Prospect for Change in US/Iranian Relations

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¶6. (C) While most of our contacts are predicting little change in the U.S.-Iranian relationship, there are disagreements among some about the future of strategy for negotiations. A university professor said that the electoral outcome in Iran was proof that President Obama's speech to the Muslim world was ineffective as it failed to sway Iranian voters toward a more moderate candidate, and he predicted that difficult relations would continue. A few said that the onus was now on America to deliver concrete incentives for Ahmedinejad to negotiate. His domestic political base appears secure and unpopular international sanctions may only strengthen his position.

#### Official Government Reaction

¶7. (C) MFA Policy Planning Director Omar Nahar told PolOff that Jordan would likely refrain from any official statements commenting on the results of Iran's elections, but would offer the customary letter of congratulation once the official results were certified. Most of our contacts noted that Jordan would follow the Arab consensus in reacting to the election.  
Beecroft